

THE CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

BY A LAYMAN.

"NOCTURNA VERSATE MANU, VERSATE DIURNA."—"BE THESE YOUR STUDIES BY DAY AND BY NIGHT."

VOL. I.

ALBANY, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1816.

No. 39.

ESSAYS AND PARAGRAPHS,
ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

REFLECTIONS FOR SATURDAY EVENING.

"This people say the time is not come, the time that the LORD's house
should be built."
HAGGAI, i. 2.

Procrastination, particularly in those concerns which relate to God's work, or the eternal salvation of our immortal souls, is becoming so prevalent, and fashionable in our land, that it may not be unprofitable, not only to myself, but to those who are sunk into a state of supineness and lethargic stupidity about religious matters, to spend a short time this evening in reflecting whether we are not really and indeed, saying from our hearts, like this deluded people—"The time is not come, the time for the Spirit to be poured down from on high."

Let us look at this people, Judah and Benjamin, delivered from captivity, and commanded by Cyrus, king of Persia, to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem. We find, when a kind of necessity urged them to leave off the work, they immediately began to build and ornament houses for themselves to dwell in, and entirely gave up any further concern about building the temple of the LORD. The LORD seeing their supineness and the inclination of their hearts, raised up Haggai and Zechariah, to reprove the people, and to tell them, that in consequence of their wilfully permitting the house of God to be waste, that HE had smitten their land with barrenness, so that the vintage and the harvest failed.

If we compare ourselves with this people, surely we have been like them led out of captivity and delivered from bondage, and have the same command enjoined on us by our Heavenly King, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent of the Father, that "we as lively stones might be built up a spiritual house to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Him." He is the chief corner stone elect, precious to those who believe; but to the disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected, as a stone of stumbling and rock of offence.

When we, therefore, compare our present situation to what we were when in captivity and bondage, being then under the law, but now made free by the blood of Christ, ("for if the Son make us free, we shall be free indeed.") it is impossible to think that the heart of man could be sunk into such a deplorable condition, as not to feel the immediate necessity of applying every means and every faculty that God has put in our power, and endowed us with, to obtain the only and chief object for which we were created; namely, our everlasting happiness; "for God willeth not the death of a sinner, but

rather that he would turn unto him and live." Was it of necessity, that we desisted from this work? Why then we might have some plea. But the case is otherwise, and we prefer every work, no matter how insignificant or trifling, to the work of salvation. Many persons allow the necessity of it; and, perhaps, when afflictions or the judgments of God sit sore on them, make numerous vows and resolutions in their mind, that if God will but spare them this once, they will "consider their ways!" But what, let me ask, is the result—like the parable in Luke xi.—"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and finding none; he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out: And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished: Then goeth he, and taketh unto him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." This is the sad effects of unbelief and impenitence, which our Lord Jesus Christ tells us the hardness of our hearts and contempt of his word will assuredly bring upon us. Indeed, we thus dismiss all our anxious concerns and thoughts which we once had on this subject, in some such way as Felix did his reprover; for, after reasoning of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, he certainly trembled; but the impression seems to vanish in a moment, for he said—"Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

It is thus with the ardent youth, who, perhaps, has had some serious reflections and thinks religion of some importance; but his heart still averse to what his conscience recommends, rises against the thoughts of sacrificing the prime of life to the gloomy duties of prayer and self denial. He does not resolve, never to attend to those things; but "the time is not come," and it will be soon enough to repent and lead a life of godliness when he is getting old. But, ah, vain youth! will you, or dare you, on serious reflection, devote your prime of life and youthful vigour to the Devil's service, and think your hoary head and imbecility quite sufficient and good enough for God! It is thus with the man of business; conscience may smite him at intervals for living without prayer, without reflection, without God in his thoughts or dealings; and yet what is his remedy—does he immediately implore forgiveness and mercy through the atoning blood of Christ? Or does he even promise to forsake the error of his ways? Not even this but he resolves when his busy time is over, when his favourite object is gained, and his fortune made, that he will then think of God and such things! But let me tell thee, "thou fool, this night thy soul may be required of thee."

It is thus with persons in single life, they intend to be better when settled in the world, and they think God will not be so unjust as to punish them for the gratification of these passions and lusts which

they say he has given them. It is thus with the encumbered parent; she, perhaps, looks forward to the time when her family will be got off her hands—then she will have leisure to attend to the concerns of her soul. It is thus with the drunkard and debauchee, wearied in their own way, they intend, as soon as they can shake off their old connections and companions, to shake off their sins and lead a new life. In short, it is thus with numbers in our towns and villages in the present day, who put off the great concern of their souls to another time, thinking God will give them a still longer respite: But, alas! a dying hour awakens them, like the foolish virgins, to bitter reflections on their own fatal folly, and wilful neglect of the means of grace which God put in their power. To put off things to another time, of course implies a dislike to the things themselves. This, therefore, is a sinful delay, arising from an alienation of the heart from God; than which nothing can be more offensive in his sight. This prevailing principle keeps us from being prepared for death, and what duty has Christ more forcibly enjoined than this, "*Be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh*"—"What I say unto you I say unto all—WATCH." Why then are we not as men who wait for the coming of our Lord, but from the secret thought "*that the time is not come*." We all know, that we must die, yet we consider it as something at a distance. This principle is certainly contrary to the tenor of all God's commands; for through the whole Scriptures we are told to attend to divine things immediately and without delay.—"Work while it is to-day, the night cometh when no man can work"—"While you have light believe in the light, that you may be the children of light."—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."—"To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," lest the judgment threatened be executed upon you; that because when Christ called you refused; when he stretched out his hands ye did not regard, he also will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh—When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind—When distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall you call upon him, but he will not answer; you shall seek him early, but shall not find him—"O, sinners! awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead."—Let such of you then as are awakened to a sense of your guilt and danger, take heed that you rest not short of a hearty compliance with the terms of salvation proposed in the Gospel. Take heed that you rest not in your own attainments, or in any thing short of an interest in Christ. Labour to see thoroughly your own emptiness; your undone and helpless state, and the infinite sufficiency there is in Jesus to supply ALL your wants, resolutely, readily, constantly, and immediately, commit your souls to Him, and steadfastly rely upon Him, and HIM only, for justification, sanctification and redemption; for whom he justifies, he sanctifies, and whom he sanctifies, he glorifies; therefore, labour to bring forth fruit meet for repentance, and by this prove yourselves; *shew your faith by your works*, and by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek for honour and immortality, that in the end you may have

OMICRON.

ETERNAL LIFE.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The articles in our columns of this day, on the subject of Sunday Schools, are calculated to awaken interest on a question of human

happiness or misery. Education is the foundation in many minds, of goodness and utility of character, if not in all. The question, however, is deeply metaphysical, and had we the ability we have not the inclination to discuss it. It is sufficient for us to know, that whether the moral sense exist or not, the benefits and the blessings of education can never be denied. But the poor are every where too much cut off from this source of human happiness and usefulness. Want of time and want of means, with those who labour necessarily and constantly for subsistence, are insuperable bars to their advancement in knowledge. But one of these obstacles is removed by the establishment of Sunday Schools for adults; and the latter may be diminished if not entirely removed: by the aid of charitable institutions. The example, held out in the resolution from New-York, is worthy of imitation; and we trust will not lose its effect upon the enlightened and benevolent citizens of Albany.

V.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

In our last Reflections, in the 9th line of the quoted blank verse, for "*shining silver*," read "*navy silver*." The error did not, however, go through the whole number.

We have received a manuscript, entitled "A PLAN for the MORE SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT of DOMESTIC MISSIONS. In a letter to a Friend. By an EVANGELIST. Without saying, whether we approve or not of this plan, in all its parts, we can assure the reader, that the article is well worthy of perusal, and will render several of our future numbers very interesting to all who view the subject of MISSIONS, as it really is, a subject of deep importance to the temporal and eternal welfare of an immense portion of the human race. We shall commence the publication of the article, alluded to, in our next, and continue it in each successive number, till finished.

From the EPISTLES of HENRY KIRKE WHITE.

TO HIS BROTHER JAMES.

Midway between Winteringham and Hull,
January 11th, 1805.

Dear James,

You will not be surprised at the style of this letter, when I tell you it is written in the Winteringham Packet, on a heap of flour bags, and surrounded by a drove of fourteen pigs, who raise the most hideous roar every time the boat rolls. I write with a silver pen, and with a good deal of shaking, so you may expect very bad scribbling. I am now going to Hull, where I have a parcel to send to my mother, and I would not lose the opportunity of writing.

I am extremely glad that you are attentive to matters of such moment as are those of religion; and I hope you do not relax in your seriousness, but continue to pray that God will enable you to walk in the paths of righteousness, which alone lead to peace. He alone, my dear James, is able to give you a heart to delight in his service, and to set at nought the temptations of the world. It may seem to you, in the first beginning of your christian progress, that religion wears a very unpromising aspect, and that the gaieties of the world are indeed very delicious; but I assure you, from what I have myself experienced, that the pleasures of piety are infinitely more exquisite than those of fashion and of sensual pursuits. It is true, they are not so violent, or so intoxicating, (for they consist in one even tenor of mind, a lightness of heart, and sober cheerfulness, which none but those who have experienced can conceive;) but they leave no sting behind them; they give pleasure on reflection, and will

soothe the mind in the distant prospect.—And who can say this of the world or its enjoyments?

Even those who seem to enter with the most spirit into the riotous and gaudy diversions of the world, are often known to confess that there is no real satisfaction in them; that their gaiety is often forced, when their hearts are heavy; and that they envy those who have chosen the more humble but pleasant paths of religion and virtue.

I am not at all particular as to the place of worship you may attend, so as it be under a serious preacher, and so as you attend regularly. I should think it a very good exercise for you, if you were to get a blank paper book, and were to write down in it any thing which may strike you in the sermons you hear on a Sunday; this would improve your style of writing, and teach you to think on what you hear. Pray endeavour to carry this plan into execution, I am sure you will find it worth the trouble. You attend the church now and then, I conclude, and if you do, I should wish to direct your attention to our admirable liturgy, and avoid, if possible, remarking what may seem absurd in the manner it is repeated.

* * * * *

TO MR. MADDOCK.

Winteringham, 1st March, 1805.

My Dear Ben,

* * * *

I hope and trust that you have at length arrived at that happy temperament of disposition, that, although you have much cause of sadness within, you are yet willing to be amused with the variegated scenes around you, and to join, when occasions present themselves, in innocent mirth. Thus, in the course of your peregrinations, occurrences must continually arise, which, to a mind willing to make the best of every thing, will afford amusement of the chastest kind. Men and manners are a never-failing source of wonder and surprise, as they present themselves in their various phases. We may very innocently laugh at the brogue of a Somerset peasant—and I should think that person both cynical and surly who could pass by a group of laughing children, without participating in their delight, and joining in their laugh. It is a truth most undeniable, and most melancholy, that there is too much in human life which extorts tears and groans, rather than smiles. This, however, is equally certain, that our giving way to unremitting sadness on these accounts, so far from ameliorating the condition of mortality, only adds to the aggregate of human misery, and throws a gloom over those moments when a ray of light is permitted to visit the dark vale of life, and the heart ought to be making the best of its fleeting happiness. Landscape too, ought to be a source of delight to you; fine buildings, objects of nature, and a thousand things which it would be tedious to name. I should call the man, who could survey such things as these without being affected with pleasure, either a very weak-minded and foolish person, or one of no mind at all. To be always sad, and always pondering on internal griefs, is what I call utter selfishness: I would not give two-pence for a being who is locked up in his own suffering, and whose heart cannot respond to the exhilarating cry of nature, or rejoice because he sees others rejoice. The loud and unanimous chirping of the birds on a fine sunny morning, pleases me, because I see they are happy:

and I should be very selfish, did I not participate in their seeming joy. Do not, however, suppose that I mean to exclude a man's own sorrows from his thoughts, since that is an impossibility, and, were it possible, would be prejudicial to the human heart. I only mean that the whole mind is not to be incessantly engrossed with its cares, but with cheerful elasticity to bend itself occasionally to circumstances, and give way without hesitation to pleasing emotions. To be pleased with little, is one of the greatest blessings.

Sadness is itself sometimes, infinitely more pleasing than joy; but this sadness must be of the expansive and generous kind, rather referring to mankind at large, than the individual; and this a feeling not incompatible with cheerfulness and a contented spirit. There is difficulty, however, in setting bounds to a pensive disposition; I have felt it, and I have felt that I am not always adequate to the task. I sailed from Hull to Barton the day before yesterday, on a rough and windy day, in a vessel filled with a marching regiment of soldiers: the band played finely, and I was enjoying the many pleasing emotions which the water, sky, winds, and musical instruments excited, when my thoughts were suddenly called away to more melancholy subjects. A girl, genteely dressed, and with a countenance which, for its loveliness, a painter might have copied for Hebe, with a loud laugh seized me by the great coat, and asked me to lend it her: she was one of those unhappy creatures who depend on the brutal and licentious for a bitter livelihood, and was now following in the train of one of the officers. I was greatly affected by her appearance and situation, and more so by that of another female who was with her, and who, with less beauty, had a wild sorrowfulness in her face, which shewed she knew her situation. This incident, apparently trifling, induced a train of reflections, which occupied me fully during a walk of six or seven miles to our parsonage. At first I wished I had fortune to erect an asylum for all the miserable and destitute:—and there was a soldier's wife, with a wan and haggard face, and a little infant in her arms, whom I would also have wished to place in it.—I then grew out of humour with the world, because it was so unfeeling and so miserable, and because there was no cure for its miseries; and I wished for a lodging in the wilderness, where I might hear no more of wrongs, affliction or vice: but, after all my speculations, I found there was a reason for these things in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that to those who sought it there was also a cure. So I banished my vain meditations, and knowing that God's providence is better able to direct the affairs of men than our wisdom—I leave them in his hands.

From the N. Y. COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

It is one of the essential injunctions contained in the Christian religion, that one day in seven should be set apart for the solemn service of the divine Being, who has been pleased to declare, that "those who honor him he will honor." The command is express, and it has been observed by some of the most judicious men, that the streams of religion run deeper or shallower, as the banks of the Sabbath are kept up or neglected; and to this it may be added, that the temporal, not to say any thing of the spiritual happiness of individuals, families and communities, may be estimated in proportion to the manner, in which religious duties are performed on that day.

This day the Deity to man has given
By just degrees to train their souls for Heaven,
And publicly to join in grateful praise
For all the blessings of their other days.

This small return he surely may expect,
 And will as surely punish its neglect.
 On this his day, necessity alone
 For absence from the temple can atone;
 And yet how much this crying evil grows,
 Each slight excuse and needles journey shews.

Many pious men, of high rank and the most distinguished literary acquirements, have been remarkable for the devout manner in which they have observed the Christian Sabbath. I might in particular, mention Sir Mathew Hale, who, during the last part of his life, was Lord Chief Justice of England; and no less celebrated for his mental endowments, than for his probity and inflexible integrity in the most perilous times. During the variety of factions by which the nation was convulsed in the reign of Charles I.—the Protectorate of Cromwell—and the first years of Charles II.—he administered justice with a prudence and impartiality which may have been equalled, but never surpassed, since his time. This great man, whom it would be absurd to suspect either of bigotry or superstition, in his direction to his children for keeping the Lord's Day, expresses himself to the following purport: "I have found that the due observance of the Sabbath day has been of singular comfort and advantage to me, and has ever been succeeded by a blessing on the rest of my time. Indeed, the week so begun has always been prosperous! while, on the other hand, when I have been negligent in religious duties, I have found that I have been unhappy and unsuccessful, even in my secular employments, so that I could easily make a calculation of the success with which my exertions were to be attended during the ensuing week, by the manner in which I passed the Sabbath; and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but after the most mature reflection and sound experience." He concludes with the following exhortation—"Perform all this, (their religious observance of the Lord's Day,) cheerfully, uprightly, and honestly, and count it not a burden; for be assured that you shall find a blessing in so doing; and remember, it is your father, who loves and will not deceive you, that tells you so; but what is more, recollect that the eternal God hath promised, (Isaiah LVIII. 13, 14.)—"If thou turn thy feet from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight; the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shall honor him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee upon the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

The command, as I have already observed, for keeping holy the Sabbath day, is express, and the due appropriation of this portion of our time for the purposes of religion, has been deemed of so great importance to the good order and tranquillity of society, that wherever Christianity is either the established or prevailing religion of the land, legislators have judged it expedient to enforce obedience by enacting laws for punishing delinquents. Here I think it proper to make an abstract of the ordinance of the Corporation, which has been passed for this purpose, so that those who have no fear of offending their Creator, may know the risque, which they run by flying into the face of human authority.

Persons doing any servile work on the Lord's day (works of piety, charity and necessity excepted,) driving or conveying animals or goods, from one part of the city to the other, opening the door of any shop or store, shooting, sporting, playing, horse-racing, fishing, wading horses, or the carrying on of any traffic, except in fish before the hour of nine in the morning, and milk until nine in the morning and after five in the afternoon, are subject to the penalty of *five dollars*. Butchers selling or exposing to sale small meat in any place within the city forfeit *five dollars* for every piece so sold or exposed; persons riding on horse-back, driving coaches, carriages, carts, &c. in passing any place of worship to the southward of Grand and Vestry-streets, except on a walk, are liable to a penalty of *ten dollars*. Inn-keepers, victuallers, grocers, &c. who permit tippling in their houses on the Lord's day, forfeit *ten dollars*, and if any persons found tippling there-

in, do not forthwith withdraw, when directed by a marshal or constable, they are liable to a fine of *five dollars*.

Parents, guardians, masters or mistresses, are severally liable for the penalties which may be incurred by minors, apprentices, servants or slaves, when found guilty of trespassing against these regulations.

But, though a number of years have elapsed since the whole, or at least the greatest part, of this ordinance has been enacted, it is much to be regretted that it has not, till of late, answered any of the salutary purposes for which it was intended. It was as inoffensive as a sword in its scabbard. Boys were seen assembled in crowds at every pond in the vicinity of the city, and also gathered together for the purpose of play at the corners of many of our most public streets. At so glaring a violation of the law, both human and divine, the pious and orderly part of the community, have been long grieved, whilst they have been frequently interrupted, in their devout meditations, by these tumultuous assemblages, and their ears have been too often shocked by the profane oaths and obscene conversation of these juvenile offenders. In short, it was impossible for decent people to live comfortably in their houses, if situated in the vicinity of these unruly meetings, nor go or return, from a place of public worship, without seeing and hearing what was extremely offensive. It was truly astonishing that so many parents could be found, who paid so little regard to the future prosperity of their offspring. Indeed, had all laws, both human and divine, been silent on the subject, one might have thought that common sense would have taught them, that boys, when exempt from going to school or learning their trades, and perfectly free from any kind of restraint, would naturally flock together in mobs, and learn more mischief on this one day than it was easy for them to do on the remaining six. I therefore consider *sabbath breaking* as an evil of a more serious nature than many are aware of. Indeed, were I one of those blinded men who spurn at revealed religion, I would, from the evil effects which I daily see resulting from the meeting of multitudes of thoughtless boys together, and the dreadful consequence of bad example, deem it a sacred duty to keep them within my own sight on that day. At all events, I would, if possible, prevent them from associating with those, who being entirely left to their own freedom, are allowed to become the outcasts of society.

I have read the confessions and dying words of many, who have suffered on the gallows, both in this country and in Europe, and few of them have I found, in which the wretched culprit does not attribute his untimely end to *Sabbath breaking and drunkenness*. Men of reflection well know, that what I have here advanced is an awful truth.

But since too many parents, guardians, &c. are as thoughtless of the consequences, which naturally result from an open violation of the Lord's Day, as the children, whom they ought to keep in subjection, it becomes the imperious duty of magistrates to think and act for them. To this subject the Corporation have not been inattentive; but it seems to have remained for the present board to lay the axe to the root of this alarming evil. It was formerly enjoined on all magistrates, constables and marshals to detect and apprehend offenders against the Sunday laws; nor is this injunction now removed. It was, however, too vague; for what was the business of so many was but little attended to by any one. It is now, however, made the business of the high constable (Mr. Jacob Hays) to see that this law be strictly enforced. He is authorized to employ as assistants such and so many constables and marshals as he may deem necessary: but the responsibility rests entirely upon his shoulders. By the unremitted exertions of this gentleman, a great change has already been effected for the better.—Crowds of vicious boys seldom convene in our streets and other public places, and when it happens, that they do meet, they are speedily dispersed. The disorderly grog shops, those detestable sinks of vice and depravity, where thoughtless men too often spend the greatest part of their week's earning in dissipation, totally regardless of their families, are greatly checked. Here, however, there is still much remaining to be done. But let this active officer persevere (and that he will there is no reason to doubt) and we shall soon see the Sabbath observed with much more reverence, and the morals of the thoughtless part of the community, both young and old, greatly improved. The task allotted to Mr. Hays is no less arduous than important; but when

we see the zeal, the intrepidity and judgment, which he has frequently displayed as a police officer in bringing offenders to justice (if God preserve his health) we have no reason to despair of his ultimate success.

SABBATICUS.

FROM THE SAME.

The object of this notice is to invite attention to the subject of Sunday Schools, for teaching unlettered males, both children and adults,* to read the Holy Scriptures. The New-York Female Union Sunday School Society, for the instruction of females, has made its appearance under such favorable auspices, and already called into exercise so much benevolence and zeal, that the objects selected for its attention, may be considered as provided for. At least, it does not appear but that the operations of this Society may be so extended, as to embrace all those untaught females who cannot be received into some public Free School.

It is confidently stated, that there are great numbers of adults in this city who are unable to read, and who would willingly avail themselves of an opportunity to learn. It is believed, that those who have not enquired into the state of the illiterate poor, would be astonished at the result of a partial investigation, undertaken with a view to estimate the number of persons over 16 years of age who know not the use of letters. It will occur to every one, that a large proportion of these people are to be found in the lowest class of society; and that they are so, goes far to prove that ignorance is the mother of their degeneracy and their wretchedness. These are the unhappy objects whose necessities press so hard upon the charity of those whose mental cultivation fitted them for profitable industry, and guided them to the more eligible walks of life. But the wants of these people can be, at best, but partially supplied by any system of public or private beneficence. They remain poor and miserable still. Their ignorance either prevents successful exertions to help themselves, or incapacitates them for making the most of what is thrown in their way. What then can be done effectually to relieve them, or to enable them to relieve themselves, unless the light of knowledge be poured into their minds?

But there are considerations of more general interest to be presented. The condition of this class of people deeply affects the welfare of the community. They may be regarded as the natural patrons of vice and whatever is dangerous to the peace of society. Oppressed by their circumstances, and having no resources in their own minds, they easily fall into the indulgence of their strongest and grossest propensities. They soon lose all sense of moral obligation, and are not deterred from wickedness by remorse of conscience, or by fear of punishment, by hope of esteem or dread of reproach. By degrees they throw off all restraint; and grow desperate in feelings as in circumstances; they are hurried from one indulgence to another, from concealed iniquity to open crimes, until, at last, many of them are brought by the laws to end their days in a prison, or on a scaffold. The necessary limits of this paragraph will permit but a slight notice of the subject here brought into view. Perhaps, indeed, it does not need to be shown that the personal wretchedness of this class of people, is in a great degree owing to their ignorance. But to this also, it is believed an examination would prove, that much of their wickedness may be traced. In the accounts of the adult schools in England, it is stated to have been ascertained, that of the criminals convicted before magistrates, but few were able to read. The commission of crimes was, therefore, by high authority, ascribed to the want of education among the poor, and their consequent ignorance of religion. The City of London Society for the instruction of adults, infer the importance of their association from the fact, that the aggregate of crimes by which the goals were crowded, appears, from authentic information, to be attributable in a great degree to ignorance. Doubtless the same is true in this, and in every other country. The peace and happiness of society, therefore, require an effort to enlighten and reform the uneducated poor. It is plain that the Sabbath affords the

best opportunity for attempting this. Experience has proved that there is no very formidable difficulty in the way of their learning to read. Teaching them to read the bible is calculated to produce the effects desired. When this has been done, the beneficial results have abundantly surpassed expectation, and encouraged perseverance. Schools of the kind in question bring the learners to some observance of the Lord's Day, which, in itself, exerts a very powerful restraint upon their minds and habits. Teaching the ignorant to read the scriptures is opening to them the fountain of true morality, as well as of true religion, and bringing them under the influence of the strongest motives to good conduct—motives which are enforced by the most awful sanctions, which keep conscience awake, and point to a future world. To enable them to read, is to qualify them to pass their leisure hours pleasantly and profitably at home, instead of wasting their time, their money, and their health, at the haunts of idleness, intemperance and guilt. The hopeful tendency of such schools, in regard to the spiritual and eternal interests of those who might belong to them, need only be hinted at. In this view, the condition of the illiterate poor is truly lamentable, and makes a loud appeal to every cultivated mind and every feeling heart.

It is not doubted but that schools for the purpose above-mentioned, would be patronized by every good citizen—by all indeed who consider the subject, and especially by the intelligent and pious of every denomination. As the best method of procuring the institution, and providing for the permanent and the proper management of such schools, it is in contemplation to call a meeting of such as are disposed to favor the object, either as subscribers or by active services, that a Sunday School Society, for the instruction of males, may be formed. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the proposed meeting.

BIOGRAPHY.

SKETCH OF REV. OLIVER HEYWOOD, D. D.

OLIVER HEYWOOD, D. D. was born of parents distinguished for piety and worth, at Little Leaver, in Lancashire, March, 1629. He set a special mark on the day of his being baptized, and on its annual return, renewed his baptismal covenant, and dedicated himself afresh to God. He gave early signs of great tenderness of conscience, and delight in divine things, and used often, when a child, to express a wish that he might be "a good minister." This encouraged his parents to think of devoting him to the sanctuary. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, whither he went in 1547. While he was there, his father gave him these written injunctions.

"My son, labour above all things to make your peace with God, by humbling your soul evening and morning, and oftener before him, that you may know, that God has begun a good work of grace in your heart. Be very frequent in reading the scriptures, with knowledge and understanding, that you may be a good scribe, armed against temptations, and able to convince gain sayers. Labour to get every day some sanctified thoughts and spiritual meditations, which will be a heavenly life, and a walking with God; and write them in a book, and title it *The meditations of my Youth*. Take short notes of every sermon you hear, and write some fairly over for your loving mother. Often remember how short and precious your time is, and that upon it depends eternity. As to society, keep a mean; neither too solitary, lest you be melancholy; nor too much in company, lest you be drawn aside. Above all, shun bad company and seek good."

Mr. Heywood was greatly benefitted by attending the religious meetings of the serious scholars of his college, and often blessed God for the profit and pleasure, which he derived from the ministry of some celebrated preachers in the university. He pursued his studies industriously; but he afterward blamed himself for not applying more to philosophical and human learning, and said, "I prize learning above all sublunary excellencies, and I might have been more useful had I improved my time better." When he had taken his Bachelor's degree, he returned to his father's house, where he lived, about half a year, in close retirement. At length, by the advice of several ministers, he began to preach, was greatly approved, and was soon invited to Coley,

* We understand that the Methodist Society has made arrangements for the instruction of both males and females: and that they commence next Sabbath, in their large School Room, in Second-street.

where he settled in 1652. His annual income was small. After his ejection by the act of Uniformity, he was sometimes in great distress. But Providence so remarkably appeared for him, that he was enabled, not only to support the expense of fines, imprisonment, and other hard usage, which he suffered in those days of persecution, but also to maintain two sons in academical learning.

His ministerial labours were attended with abundant success, and were the means of converting and edifying multitudes of souls. But with all his success, he considered himself as less than the least of all saints. He met with some difficulty among his own people. Some were displeased, because he would not admit all persons promiscuously to the Lord's table; and others because he would not countenance the rigidity of the opposite extreme. And there were some who treated him cruelly, because he would not attach himself to their political party. But notwithstanding these molestations, and the offer of a much richer living in another place, he would not quit his humble and useful station, until he was compelled by necessity. During the tumultuous times, in which he lived, he suffered great vexations. He was often fined, suspended, excommunicated, imprisoned, for not conforming to the rigorous exactions, which were imposed. But still he continued his labours, when he could do it with personal safety; and he often preached with great peril. Yea, he was sometimes obliged to secret himself to avoid an arrest. His unwearied diligence, humility, self-denial, meekness and sweetness of temper, commanded the love of all, who were not enemies of all righteousness.

It appears from his diary, which he kept within five days of his death, that in one year, 1681, besides his stated work on the Lord's day, he preached 150 times, kept 50 days of fasting and prayer, and 9 of thanksgiving, and travelled 1400 miles in service to Christ and immortal souls. This was the greatest number of miles travelled in any year; but several years exceed in other particulars. His last sermon was on the sabbath but one before his death, from 2 Timothy, ii. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, &c.* He died in great peace and joy, on May 4, 1702, aged 73. His publications are in high estimation for sound, lively, practical, heart-affecting divinity.

Some anecdotes are related concerning him, which are worthy of notice and remembrance.

He was once sent for by the parish minister of Honley, a profane young man, then in a fatal consumption, who, on Mr. Heywood's arrival, confessed, with agonies of conscience, his dreadful sin, in taking upon him the ministry, while he knew himself to be unconverted; and begged him to pray with him, and earnestly asked him what repentance was. Mr. Heywood gave him his best advice, and was desired to come again. But before he could go, this young clergyman died, without a satisfactory evidence that he had obtained mercy. An awful warning for ungodly ministers!

Mr. Heywood, after the loss of his income, was reduced to such great straits, that his children became impatient for want of food. He called his servant Martha, (who could not desert the family in their distress) and said to her, "Martha, take a basket, and go to Halifax; call upon Mr. N.—, the shopkeeper, and desire him to lend me five shillings. If he is kind enough to do it, buy such things as you know we most want. The Lord give you good speed; and in the mean time we will offer up our requests to him, who feedeth the young ravens when they cry." Martha went; but, when she came to the house, her heart failed her, and she passed by the door again and again, without going in to tell her errand. Mr. N.—, standing at the shop door, called her to him, and asked her, if she was not Mr. Heywood's servant? When she told him, she was, he said to her, "I am glad to see you, as some friends have given me five guineas for your master, and I was just thinking how I could send them." Upon this she burst into tears, and told him her errand. He was much affected with the story, and bade her come to him, if ever the like necessity should return. Having procured the necessary provisions, she hastened back with them, when, upon her entering the house, the children eagerly examined the basket: and the father, hearing Martha's narrative smiled and said, "The Lord hath not forgotten to be gracious; his word is true from the beginning; they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

Another anecdote is as follows:

When the spirit of persecution was so hot against this good man, that he was obliged to leave his family, he set off on horseback, one winter's morning, before it was light, like Abraham, *not knowing whither he went*, and without a farthing in his pocket. Having committed himself to the care of Providence, he determined, at length, to leave his horse to go which way he would. Having gone all day without any refreshment, the horse, towards evening, bent his course to a farm-house, a little out of the road. Mr. Heywood calling at the door, a decent woman came, of whom (after a suitable apology) he requested that she would give him and his horse shelter for the night, telling her that he only wished for a little hay for his beast, and liberty for himself to sit by her fire-side. Upon calling her husband, they both kindly invited him in. The mistress soon prepared something for him to eat, at which he expressed his concern, as, he said, he had no money to make them a recompense; but he hoped God would reward them. They assured him, that he was welcome, and begged him to make himself easy. After some time, the master asked him, what countryman he was. He answered, that he was born in Lancashire, but had now a wife and children near Halifax. "That is a town," said the farmer, "where I have been, and had some acquaintance." After inquiring about several of them, he asked, if he knew any thing of one Mr. O. Heywood, who had been a minister near Halifax, but was now, on some account, forbidden to preach." To which he replied, "There is a great deal of noise about that man; some speak well, and some very ill of him; for my own part, I can say very little in his favour." "I believe," said the farmer, "he is of that sect, which is every where spoken against; but pray what makes you form such an indifferent opinion of him?" Mr. H. answered, "I know something of him; but, as I do not choose to propagate an ill report of any one, let us talk on some other subject." After keeping the farmer and his wife some time in suspense, who were uneasy at what he had said, he at length told them, "that he was the poor outcast, after whom they made such kind inquiries." All was now surprise, joy and thankfulness, that Providence had brought him under their roof. The master of the house then said to him, "I have a few neighbours who love the gospel; if you will give us a word of exhortation, I will run and acquaint them. This is an obscure place, and as your coming here is not known, I hope you will have no interruption." Mr. Heywood consented, and a small congregation was gathered, to whom he preached with that fervour, affection and enlargement, which the singular circumstances served to inspire. A small collection was then made to help the poor traveller on his way. This interview providentially introduced Mr. Heywood to a new circle of acquaintance, among whom he afterward preached with great success. *Panoplist.*

DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

At a respectable meeting of the Mechanics of the city of Albany, held at the Mechanics Academy, on Monday evening, Feb. 19, 1816, pursuant to public notice.

Mr. JAMES CHESTNEY, was appointed Chairman, and Mr. ROBERT BOYD, Secretary.

The object of the meeting having been explained, it was thereupon resolved unanimously, that the mechanics now present, with such others as may think proper to associate with them, will form themselves into a Society, to be denominated "*the Society of Mechanics of the City of Albany, associated for the suppression of Vice and Immorality, and the promotion of Good Morals.*"

The following persons were appointed a committee to draft a constitution for the said society, and a petition to the legislature in accordance with one from the board of supervisors of the city and county of Albany, for "regulating and restricting petty groceries and taverns," to wit: Charles R. Webster, William Mayell, Neh. B. Basset, Elisha Putnam, and John Boardman.

The meeting stands adjourned to Monday evening next, at 7

o'clock, then to be held at the same place; at which time all the mechanics of the city, are requested to attend.

By order of the meeting,

JAMES CHESTNEY, Chairman.

ROBERT BOYD, Secretary.

BIBLE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY.

A meeting of this society was held at Granville, on the 31st January, ult. A very laudable spirit of liberality was manifested on the occasion. More than *seventy new members* came forward and presented their contributions, and promised their personal exertions to further the great objects of the society. The Rev. Dr. Proudfit delivered a sermon, well adapted to the occasion, which, with the very interesting report of the directors, was ordered to be published.

The following were elected officers of the society for the ensuing year;

Rev. Mr. George Mairs, *President.*

Rev. Mr. N. Hall, *Vice-President.*

William Williams, Esq. *Treasurer.*

Mr. J. Stevenson, jun. *Recording Secretary.*

Rev. Mr. N. S. Prime, *Corresponding Sec'y.*

Rev. Dr. Alexander Proudfit,

Rev. Mr. John Dunlap.

Rev. Mr. Bullions,

Elder Samuel Rowley,

Rev. Ralph Robinson,

Zebulon R. Shipherd, Esq.

Mr. Abraham Savage,

} *Directors.*

From the N. Y. COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

* * Agreeable to previous notice, a meeting of a large number of gentlemen, of different denominations, was held at the City Hotel, on Monday evening the 12th inst. The subject proposed to the consideration of the meeting, was explained and illustrated in a luminous and forcible manner by several individuals, and the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

Resolved, That it is expedient to form, without delay, a society for establishing SABBATH SCHOOLS, for the instruction of such males, whether children or adults, as are unable to read or write.

Resolved, That a committee, consisting of gentlemen of the various religious denominations, be appointed by the chairman, for the purpose of preparing a constitution for the above mentioned society; and that they be requested to report the same for consideration, at a meeting to be held at this place, on Monday evening the 26th instant, at 7 o'clock.

Resolved, That this committee consist of seven.

Resolved, That the thanks of this meeting be given by the chairman to Solomon D. Gibson, for his politeness and generosity in their gratuitous accommodation.

Resolved, That the resolutions passed by this meeting be made public by the chairman and secretary.

DIVIE BETHUNE, Chairman.

ELEAZER LORD, Secretary.

February 13, 1816.

INTELLIGENCE FROM ABROAD.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY CALEB STRONG,

GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

A PROCLAMATION,

FOR A DAY OF PUBLIC FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

A sense of our dependence on the Divine Being for all the necessities of life will incline us to have recourse to Him, by prayer and supplication for His blessing on our various labours and enterprizes.

With such a view of their dependent condition, the people of this State have been accustomed to set apart a day, at an early season of the year, unitedly to acknowledge their obligations for His former unmerited goodness, and their reliance upon His future favours; and from a consciousness of our guilt and necessities, it becomes us, in a like public manner, to confess our sins before God, to entreat His forgiveness, and beseech Him, to prosper our undertakings, and supply our wants; and to afford us His gracious support under all the trials which His Providence shall order or permit.

Therefore, with the advice and consent of the Council, I appoint *Thursday the fourth day of April next*, to be observed in this State, as a day of PUBLIC FASTING AND PRAYER: And the ministers and people of each religious denomination, are requested to assemble on that day, in their respective places of public worship, that we may call our past ways to remembrance and humble ourselves in deep repentance before the Supreme Being, and implore his pardon and blessing, through the mediation of His Son CHRIST JESUS; and beseech Him, that, in the course of the ensuing year, He would grant us the good things we need, and preserve us from the evils to which we may be exposed: That he would continue to us the enjoyments of Peace; and that in due season He would renew the face of the earth, and make it soft with showers and crown the year with plenty: That He would cause the air to be salutary, and preserve us from wasting and contagious diseases: And that He would prosper our commerce manufactures and fisheries and bless us in all our lawful employments, and pursuits.

That he would succeed the means of religious instruction, and smile upon our public seminaries, and the institutions which have been established for improving the morals of the people, and training our youth to knowledge and virtue: That He would dispose us to the exercise of charity and beneficence to each other, and enable us to discharge all the duties He has enjoined upon us without reluctance, and to submit to all his dispensations without murmuring; and that we may employ ourselves diligently in our proper business and be solicitous to approve ourselves to him who has appointed us our several parts, and will hereafter reward us, not according to the bight of our stations, but according to the integrity with which we have behaved ourselves in them.

That He would bless the Government of the United States, and direct the President and Congress to such measures as shall tend to preserve the peace of the nation, and the rights of the citizens: That He would guide and protect the inhabitants of this State, and remember us with the favour that He bears to His people; and that our children after us may have such a portion of temporal good things as he sees will be best for them, and a share in the blessings of that future inheritance, wherein dwell righteousness, purity and joy.

That He would prevent the renewal of those sanguinary scenes which have long afflicted the human race, and controul the rage of human passions, so that the earth may no more be covered with violence and stained with blood; That in our days the righteous may flourish, and the virtues of humanity and peace be cherished in all the habitations of men: That the *Day Spring* from on high may visit the heathen, to give light to them who sit in darkness, and to guide their feet into the way of peace; and that all nations whom He has made, may come and worship before Him, and glorify his name.

And the people are requested to abstain from unnecessary labour and recreation on the said day.

Given at the Council Chamber in Boston this twenty ninth day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixteen, and in the fortieth of the Independence of the United States of America.

CALEB STRONG.

By his Excellency's command,
with advice and consent of the Council.

ALDEN BRADFORD, Secretary.

God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

OBITUARY.

PENNSYLVANIA. At Philadelphia, on the 6th December, the Rev. DAVID LACY, He was a respectable and useful minister of the Presbyterian Church; active and zealous in his Master's service. The place of his residence was in the county of Prince Edward, (Virginia,) within three miles of Hampden Sidney College. In that state, his character stood high—he was esteemed and beloved by the pious of all denominations. In the year 1809, he was chosen by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Moderator, to preside in their deliberations.—The duties of his office he discharged in a respectable and honorable manner.

Previously to his late visit to this city, Mr. Lacy had been labouring, for some time, under a very painful disease. Finding all other means ineffectual for its removal, he resolved to try the result of a dangerous surgical operation. To execute his purpose, he came to this city, where he expected to obtain all that the skill of the profession could furnish. To support him in the prospect of such an operation, as well as under its severe pains, required much strength of the religious principle. He had what he needed—Christianity shone in him with lustre.—In reply to his physician, who set before him all the perils attending the operation contemplated, he said, "I have deliberated on the matter, and made up my mind; I consider it my duty to run the risk, in hopes of prolonging my usefulness; I am not afraid to trust the issue in the hands of my Heavenly Father."

In the family which treated him with so much affectionate hospitality, he was always cheerful. To an attentive observer, however, there appeared in his countenance a seriousness bordering on sadness, as might naturally be expected in one who looked forward to an operation, which might speedily terminate his life; but being relieved by occasional smiles and pleasant conversation, it rendered his countenance the more interesting. In the various topics of discourse he engaged with interest; and his remarks were pertinent and edifying. Repeating the text of St. Paul, "In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you," he observed to the writer of this article, "I am trying to learn this lesson, but I find it a hard one. It was no customary performance of this delightful injunction at which he aimed; but such an affectionate and grateful giving of thanks as proceeds from a deep and abiding sense of the great goodness and unmerited favours of our Heavenly Father. Such a performance of the duty required, in his distressing circumstances, a high degree of grace."

On the Saturday evening preceding the Monday on which he submitted to the operation, he conversed with his friend Mr. R. in the hearing of the family, about his disease, and gave some direction in regard to his interment, with as much composure, as it he had been speaking on any ordinary subject.

The painful operation he bore with uncommon fortitude. It was performed with remarkable skill and dispatch; every thing appeared favourable; and his friends indulged the hope of his speedy recovery. But the next day alarming symptoms were discovered.

He grew worse daily; and on the tenth day expired. The pangs produced by the cause of his death, were most excruciating; but he sustained them with exemplary patience and submission to the divine will.

When his case became dangerous, he was visited by a brother in the ministry. To an inquiry made as to his situation, Mr. Lacy replied—"I know not how I am; I think I shall die; every sensation I feel is of the most burning kind; but thank God, I have no more fear of death, than I have felt a thousand times when I have committed myself to sleep. I never expected in such a time, to be so divested of fear." He bore a decided testimony to that important doctrine of a sinner's free justification, by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. "I have no righteousness of my own; I depend on the merits of my Saviour."

In a day or two the visit was repeated. He was asked how he felt; he replied, "I am dying; my pulse is gone." The words of St. Paul were repeated to him, "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better;" he exclaimed, "Ah! I never knew the meaning of those words before." After prayer, in the first visit, he broke out in those animated lines of the poet, so expressive of his full confidence in the care of his Maker, and firm dependence on the merits of his Redeemer:

How can I sink with such a prop,
As my eternal God,
Who bears the earth's huge pillars up,
And spreads the heaven's abroad?

How can I die, while Jesus lives,
Who rose and left the dead:
Pardon and grace my soul receives,
From my exalted Head?

Did he sink? It was to rise to everlasting honors. Did he die? It was to live forever. He has gone, no doubt, to receive the reward of his faithful ministry, a crown of grace and glory.

Let his brethren in the sacred office imitate the example of the deceased; let them persevere in a zealous discharge of its important duties; and they too shall receive a like reward, that will infinitely remunerate all their labor, toils, and sufferings.

Let Christians be thankful for another valuable testimony to the truth and excellence of their holy religion; a religion, which supports the soul under the pangs of dissolving nature, and inspires the dying saint with comfort, with joy, with triumph.

"Let me die the death of the righteous; let my last end be like his."

[Phila. D. Adv.]

POETICAL DEPARTMENT.

ORIGINAL.

For the CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

The following verses were written by a husband to his wife when separated and suffering under severe afflictions. A Dove, with a letter tied round its neck, was drawn on the top of the first leaf of the paper on which the letter was written.

OMICRON.

To thee belov'd, this Dove I send, sweet messenger of peace,
May it bring back the olive branch, to shew that troubles cease;
Not like the Dove that Noah first sent forth to seek for land,
That he might find a resting place, on which the ark might stand;
As it could not so much as find, a place whereon to light,
It hasten'd back to that retreat from whence it took its flight;
Nor like the one that last he sent, which never did return,
O! let it not be captive made, and leave me here to mourn;
Enchanted with so great a change, its wish will no doubt be
To live with thee, and e'en forget the hand that set it free;
If even so its heart is won by liberty's sweet change,
And gladly leave a prison where, it captive had to range.
Could I ungrateful ever think if such its choice may be,
Thus to resign the captive chain, and wish for to be free;
A change not more unlike to this, would liberty to me;
'Twould bring me to my earthly all, my children, and to thee.

O! then this little Dove regard, and give it space to roam,
For could it speak, O! it could tell for what I often moan;
Its head, alas! oft seem'd to droop when it has heard me sigh,
And call *Eliza*, dearest love, O! why are you not nigh?
Since none but *Him* can calm the waves, who delug'd once the earth,
O! let us look to *Him*, and seek a renewal of our birth,
As for a sign his glorious bow he did set in the sky,
That waters ne'er again should come, and never man destroy,
O! have we not a surer sign, on which we can rely;
That *Jesus* alone for us did die, that we might live thereby.
In justice does he us afflict, but mercy is his aim,
To point us to his willing grace, that it may us reclaim,
O! doubt not then his equal love, immeasurably kind;
But to his truly gracious will, be every wish resign'd;
Good when he gives, supremely good, the same when he denies;
Afflictions from a father's hand, are blessings in disguise.

The following beautiful Hymn was returned by *Eliza* in answer to the above.

OMICRON.

O! for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heav'nly frame,
A light, to shine upon the road,
That leads me to the lamb.

What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd,
How sweet their memory still;
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be;
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
And clearer light shall mark the road,
That leads me to the lamb.

SELECTED.

A few years since, Mr. John Webb, a tailor, published a volume of Poems, in one of which, entitled *Haverhill*, are the following lines, consecrated to the memory of an obscure but evangelical minister of the Gospel.

[N. Post.]

"Methinks the pious, venerable man
To duty consecrated life's brief span;
To feed his little flock—that sacred charge!
And guard it from the wolf that prowls at large.
If such—though raven-plum'd oblivion shed
Impenetrable vapour round his head—
Yet when the last stupendous morning springs,
Big with the fate of all terrestrial things,
Then holy, happy shepherd! thou shalt stand,
Among thy ransom'd sheep, at Christ's right hand;
Receive thy just reward, in glory rise,
And like a star illumine the upper skies."